

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee– Meeting Minutes
Saint Louis University
November 14, 2025

Voting Members Present: Chris Thomas, Marcia McCormick, Toby Benis, Zhenguo Lin, Rabia Rahman, Melissa Berrien-Elliott, Srikanth Mudigonda, Dana Baum, Helen Lach, Kristi Richter, Kat Walcott, Sarah Burt, Simona Rentea, Katie Mascari

Non-voting Members Present: Jay Haugen, Nicole Mispagel, Marissa Cope, Christine Harper, Janie Henderson, April Trees

Absentees: Takako Nomi, Elizabeth Richard, Jen Popiel, Katie Stamatakis

Guests: Sarah Arkebauer, Kyle Mitchell, Roobic Gharabagi, Sahin Ozdemir, Sri Condoor, Sanjay Jayaram, Jalil Kianfar, SSE; Divya Subramaniam, Health Data Science and Health Outcomes Research Programs

I. **Approval of October 10, 2025 Minutes:** Approved.

II. **Academic Program Proposals**

A. **New Program Proposals**

- **778: Introductory Health Data Science Micro-credential (third review)**
Continuation standards have been simplified as recommended by GAAC. GAAC approved unanimously.
- **813: Applied Behavior Analysis PBC (second review)**
GAAC had noticed a disconnect between admission standards and application materials. The program clarified that it intends the same admission standards as for the M.S. GAAC approved unanimously pending revised admission standards.
- **805: Electrical and Computer Engineering MS**
Kyle Mitchell, Sahin Ozdemir, and Roobic Gharabagi answered questions. Proposed new courses are in the process of being approved. Because there is very little overlap in these specialties only three required courses are specified, while the rest are electives. This program will integrate Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering program; approaches vary at other institutions around the country. Which is the correct term, provisional or conditional admission? The difference between project and thesis should be specified. Does the program intend to limit students to one year for switching from the thesis to coursework only? The program proposal must identify the curriculum for the program. GAAC decided to return the proposal for revisions, asking the program to specify an editor.
- **816: Mechanical Engineering MS**
Sri Condoor explained that a grade of C or lower will not count; a student will be placed on probation and will need to retake the course, achieving a

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grade better than C. Another course might have to be substituted because courses will be offered once a year. GAAC had concerns about the slippage between course requirements (e.g., grades) and continuation requirements (e.g., GPA). An oral exam on the thesis is required, so this should be included in the non-course requirements section.

- **818: Mechanical Engineering PhD**

The 60 credits formerly required for the doctorate have here been reduced to 40, reflecting the general reduction in hours in institutions around the country.

- **815: Aerospace Engineering MS:**

Electives overlap with Mechanical Engineering courses because the school is currently unable to offer a large number of courses in both disciplines. The 12 core courses are completely different. If an oral examination of the thesis is required, this should be specified in the catalogue. April Trees will ascertain whether this point is relevant to the other proposed engineering programs.

- **817: Aerospace Engineering PhD:**

The program will consider making the non-traditional dissertation option a possibility. It should be stated that five members are required for the doctoral oral exam/proposal defense committee.

- **814: Civil Engineering MS**

Jalil Kianfar clarified that there are three areas of emphasis, not three concentrations with separate sets of specified classes. A two-year plan of courses to be taught allows students to plan their program. Given concerns identified for all Engineering programs, GAAC decided to return the proposal for revisions, asking the program to specify an editor.

- **819: Civil Engineering PhD**

An external faculty member from outside SLU is required on the dissertation committee. This is a smaller program as far as faculty expertise is concerned and the outside member can provide more feedback to the student and better quality control for the dissertation.

Q: What happens if a student is unable to find an outside member? A:

The advisor would identify an outside member as has been done in the past. Comment: The program may want to merely recommend an outside member rather than making it mandatory; if mandatory, that can be stated in the catalogue with details contained in the handbook.

Across the board for Engineering proposals: GAAC wants curriculum outlines and standard language for continuation standards that matches University policy. Marissa Cope will create a document with her thoughts on assessment plans and share them with the programs. If an oral examination of the thesis or other non-

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course requirements are required, this should be specified in the catalogue with implementation details provided in the graduate handbook.

- **843: Applied Artificial Intelligence and Decision Analytics MS:**
All 10 courses will be offered online, with eight also available on the ground. It's unclear whether this proposal constitutes a new program or changes to an existing program. GAAC can't approve it until this is clarified.
- **824: Health Services and Clinical Outcomes Research MS:**
Divya Subramaniam answered questions. The program is offered entirely online. A set of new courses is being developed as quickly as possible, with all faculty members currently working on this. The assessment methods are missing components due to error; this will be corrected. Is there overlap with Public Health courses? We want to avoid redundancy; there may be an opportunity for interdisciplinary conversation here if there is overlap with programs in Public Health. GAAC is unable to vote to approve until courses are developed.
- **825: AI and Medicine:**
April Trees explained that she was removing this item for later discussion at a future meeting.

B. Program Closures

- **123: Spanish MA:**
This program is being delivered through dual-listing and is not sustainable. A teach-out plan is in place. Only the St. Louis campus will be affected. GAAC approved unanimously.
- **622: Spanish Education MA:**
GAAC approved unanimously.
- **704: Advanced Spanish Studies PBC:**
GAAC approved unanimously.
- **197: Women's and Gender Studies MA**
This program has not accepted students for some years. The minor and certificate will not be affected. GAAC approved unanimously.

C. Program Changes

- **45: English MA:**
April Trees removed this item, believing that the proposed changes are not substantial.
- **420: Strategic Intelligence MS**
GAAC approved unanimously.

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III. Update on past GAAC decisions

- The Introductory and Advanced Health Data Science PBCs were approved by CADD and by the Provost.
- Closure of the MS and PhD in Meteorology were approved by CADD and by the Provost.

IV. Announcements

- Next GAAC meeting December 12 in Tegeler Hall, Room 207

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.